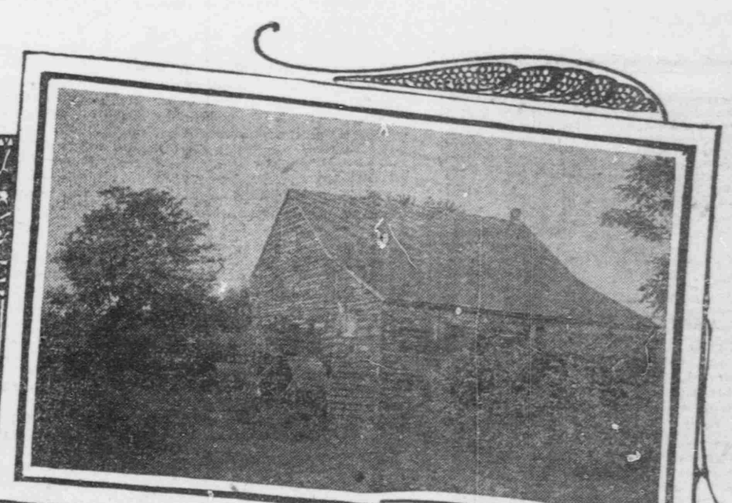
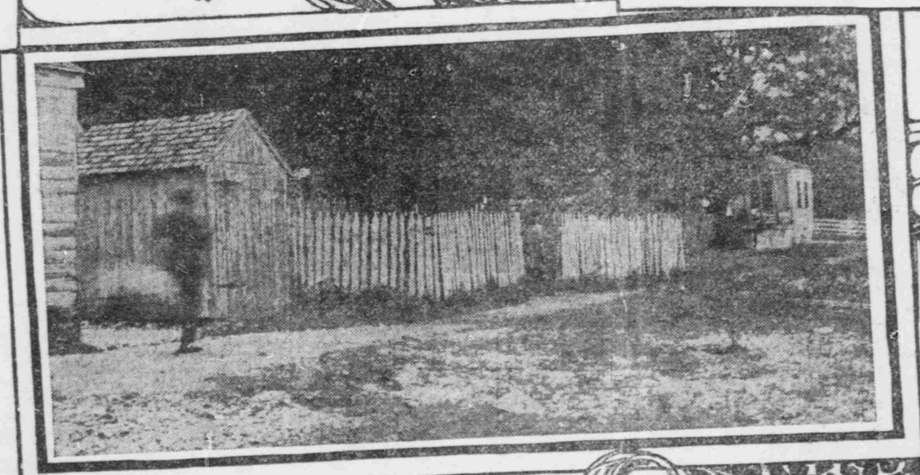
# 1814---THE CAPTURE OF WASHINGTON BY AN INVADING ARMY---1904.

OLD HOUSE NEAR BLADENSBURG.
Here Admiral Cockburn and Gen. Ross Ate Breakfast on Day of the Battle.

BARNEY'S SPRING.
Here Commodore Barney With 400 Seamen Gallantly Fought the British Veteran Troops.

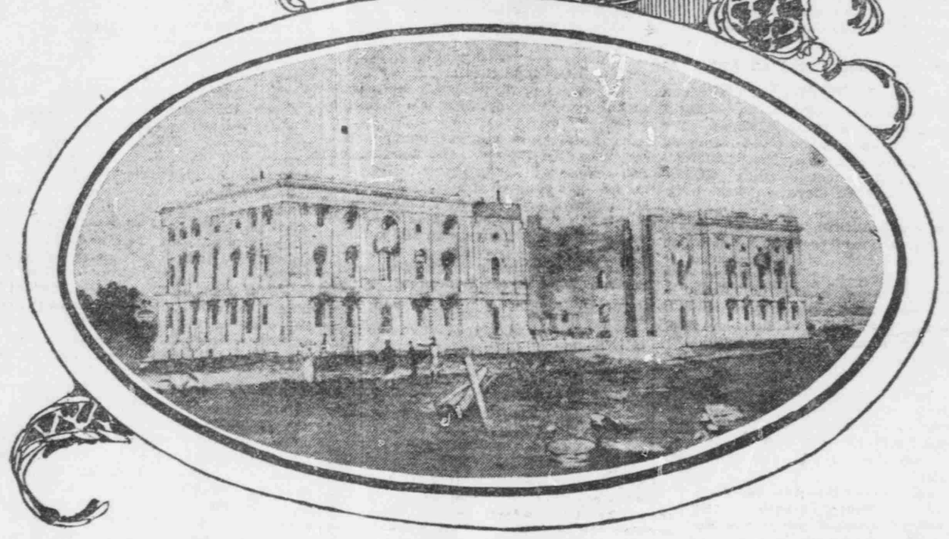


OLD MILL NEAR BLADENSBURG.
American Riflemen Stationed Behind This Annoyed the Advancing English.



MAIN STREET OF BENEDICT.
Here the English Column of Invasion Formed for March on Washington.

THE BATTLEFIELD OF BLADENSBURG.
The Right of the American Line Rested at the Clump of Trees on the Hill in the Middle Background.



THE RUINED CAPITOL.
Photograph of the Building After the British Had Wrecked It by Fire.

## Announcement of War Maneuvers Recalls Events of 1814.

## Ninetieth Anniversary of City's Capture Comes This Week.

## How the Old-Time Places Visited by British Look Today.

SEMI-OFFICIAL announcement has been made that the problem to be worked out in the next year's joint maneuvers of the army and navy will be the defense of Washington against an invading force.

This announcement recalls to Americans that the ninetieth anniversary of the capture of Washington by the British falls on Wednesday, August 24. In that month, and the year 1814, a British force landed at Benedict, Md., and marching through the villages of Nottingham and Marlboro, advanced to Bladensburg, six miles northeast of Washington, and there defeated an American army.

On the night following the battle the invaders camped on a common, part of which is now the east plaza of the Capitol. They were reckless with the torch. The sky was red with flames from the Capitol, White House, Treasury, War Office, and private buildings fired by the English, and from the navy yard, warships moored or building there, and bridges over the Potomac and Eastern Branch, which had been fired by the Americans.

### Town of Benedict.

Benedict, the base of the invaders, is a listless hamlet in Charles county, Md., on the west bank of the Patuxent River and about forty miles southeast of Washington by the wagon roads. The place has neither railroad or telegraph connection, though steamboats plying between Baltimore and Patuxent landings stop at Benedict. The town is of less importance than a century ago. Its trade and population, like that of many other water-side towns in Maryland and Virginia, has shrunk. Many of the old houses have disappeared, some by fire and some because of sheer decay.

The anchorage of the British fleet is pointed out and that part of the shore where the redcoats climbed from their small boats is shown with pride by the sleepy villagers. One may walk the old street where the English column formed for its march on Washington. Nottingham, a tiny village, and Marlboro a small town through which the invaders passed, have changed very little.

Bladensburg is pretty much now as it was then. Standing are many of the houses in and behind which the English found shelter from the American sixpounders. An old mill, under cover of which a body of the retreating Americans made a stand, is still grinding. The house in which General Ross and Admiral Cockburn, the British commanders, ate breakfast on the battle morning is in fair repair, but tenanted by less aristocratic persons than ninety years ago.

### Could Be Recognized Now.

Though no effort has been made to keep the battlefield as it was it has not so changed but that men who fought there could recognize the land could they revisit it. The English killed and some of the Americans were buried on the field, but the location of the graves has been long ago forgotten. There is one point on the battlefield which attracts the passerby. It is small natural fountain that has been bricked up. Wayfarers stop there to drink, for the water has been famous for more than 200 years. It is called Barney's Spring. This spring was the center of the American line in the last stand.

Commodore Barney and 400 sailors from the flotilla that had been turned in the Patuxent were posted a little in front of the spring. It was the point of the best fighting of the day. Most of the loss of both sides was sustained in this part of the field. And for ninety years the spring has been called Barney's spring. There is no monument on the Bladensburg field, but every now and then the proposition is made to erect a marker of some kind at the spring.

A man traveling along the route followed by the British from Benedict to Bladensburg can get some very bad history by the way. For instance this: The picture of the spring shows a negro drinking. He is an ordinary negro of the country, but the day being Sunday, he is dressed up, and wears his coat, though it is midday and the mercury registers near the 100 point.

### What a Negro Said.

"Do you know the historic significance of this place?" he was asked.

The man looked dazed and silly.

Then he was asked: "Do you know what happened here long ago?" And he answered:

"No, sah, not 'zactly, but I has heard dat de President of England shot hisself heah."

It is a country of wonderful interest through which the British marched. It is still fertile, and must have been extremely so a hundred years ago.

It is the black belt of Maryland, the negroes largely outnumbering the whites. Most of them are illiterate, but kindly, polite, and of a fair degree of intelligence. The whites are of two classes. The first class are the real people. They are lavishly hospitable, courteous in address and intensely proud of their ancestry and State. Nearly all of the men and women have been to college or academy.

The other class of whites are densely ignorant, suspicious of strangers, and of vicious habits, whisky drinking and the playing of seven-up being apparently what they live for. Nearly every man in that country chews tobacco publicly and privately, and in Charles county barrooms are conveniently located at the cross-roads.

The capture of Washington by the British is a long story, but it may be briefly told. The British threatened Washington for a year and a half before making a direct effort to capture the city.

### No Preparations for Defense.

Despite this long warning the American authorities made no preparation for defense. The British maintained a fleet of warships in the Chesapeake Bay and had made forays on Havre de Grace, Fredericktown, Frenchtown, and other places in Maryland and on the Hampton, Va. They pillaged these places, burned dwellings and stores, and it is charged killed or made prisoners many non-combatants.

In the annals of the Thirteenth Congress may be seen a preamble and resolution introduced in the House of Representatives July 15, 1813, by Philip Stuart, of Maryland, setting forth the defenselessness of Washington, the danger of attack, the presence of a hostile fleet and troops within a few hours' sail of the Capital, and urging the distribution of arms to all able-bodied men in the District of Columbia.

The record shows that the House voted to consider the preamble and resolution in secret, that a motion to lay on the table was defeated by a vote of 74 to 64, that the preamble was stricken out and the resolution to distribute arms was referred to the Committee on Military Affairs and adversely reported. And all this while British ships were cruising in the Chesapeake, ascending the Patuxent and the Potomac and making descents on villages a few miles from Washington.

President Madison and his Cabinet thought the British would not attack the Capital. In Washington there was not a piece of artillery, a regular soldier or a properly armed company of militia. There was not a redoubt on any approach to the city. Fifteen miles down the Potomac was Fort Washington, then called Forth Warburton, a frail structure mounting a few small guns, with one company of artillery to serve them. This indifference of the Madison Administration continued well into the year 1814.

### Brig Ida at Boston.

The brig Ida from Rochelle, landed at Boston May 12, 1814, and brought news that the allied troops had entered Paris and early in June, 1814, official Washington knew that several of Wellington's veteran regiments, released from European service, had embarked on troopships and convoyed by a war fleet under Vice Admiral Cockrane had set sail for the Chesapeake. President Madison July 1, 1814, called the Cabinet together to consider a plan for the defense of Washington.

A report of the army on that date showed the force of military district No. 5 (of which the District of Columbia was part) to be 2,154 officers and men. One thousand and eighty-three were at Norfolk, 532 at Baltimore, 320 in St. Mary's county Md.; 40 at Annapolis, and 79 at Fort Washington. Not one soldier in the District of Columbia.

On July 14, 1814, draft was made on the governors of Maryland, Virginia, and Pennsylvania for militia. Depredations by the British in southern Maryland were increasing, and alarm was growing in Washington. On the morning of August 16, 1814, twenty-two sailing vessels entered the Chesapeake and joined the fleet already in the Patuxent River. The combined fleet sailed up that river and dropped anchor off Benedict. The debarkation of troops began August 19. Capt. Sir Peter Parker, in the frigate Menelaus, with some small ships, was dispatched toward Baltimore, and Captain Gordon, in the frigate Seahorse, with another frigate, rocket ships, and armed schooners, was sent around Point Lookout and up the Potomac to take Alexandria, which he did.

### Troops in Washington.

The Americans were gathering troops at Washington. There were two brigades of District of Columbia militia and volunteers, numbering 1,620 men. Then, there were three regiments from Baltimore, there were two other regiments of Maryland militia, and one Virginia regiment. There were about 300 volunteer cavalry from the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Tighlman.

The regular army of the United States was represented by detachments from the Thirty-sixth and Thirty-eighth Infantry, numbering 300 men, under Lieut. Col William Scott; one company of the Twelfth Regiment, Captain Morgan, and a squadron of dragoons under Lieutenant Colonel Laval. Barney was ready to lend assistance with 400 sailors.

The American army for the defense of Washington was 7,000 men. All of these were raw recruits excepting 900 enlisted soldiers and sailors. These men were to oppose about 8,000 English veterans. The Americans had twenty-six pieces of artillery, of which twenty were six-pounders.

The English column moved out of Benedict August 20 and was at Nottingham, fifteen miles from Benedict, on the evening of the 21st. The squadron of American dragoons was sent to harass the enemy's flanks, and the Americans moved down into Maryland to meet the invaders. After getting in touch with the English at Nottingham an order came from Washington to General Winder to retire. He fell back to a country place called Long Old Fields, from which place the Americans had withdrawn.

### Stand at Bladensburg.

On the morning of August 24 the Americans, wearied by their marches and retreats, were drawn up near Bladensburg with their backs to Washington, six miles away. Between them and the village of Bladensburg ran the Eastern Branch, fordable, but yet crossed by a bridge. At noon the enemy appeared in Bladensburg, threw rockets at the Americans and started to cross the bridge. The American artillery spoke and the English retired with a loss of one killed and two wounded. Again the enemy advanced in two columns, one crossing the bridge and one fording the stream.

Reaching the Washington side of the stream the British moved to the attack. Schutz and Ragan's Baltimore regiments broke and ran. They left some batteries unsupported and these then retired. The remainder of the American line after firing a few rounds left the field. The troops rallied quickly and formed a line of battle one mile farther back, Barney's men being in the center. The fighting continued for half an hour. Barney was wounded. Colonel Thornton, Captain Hamilton and Lieutenant Codd, of the English army, were killed.

The sailors, aided by Peter's battery and Magruder's regiment, were fighting well. But the American line gave way. It rallied again and re-formed three miles farther back, when it was ordered to retire through Washington and Georgetown. The troops were enraged at this order, and mutiny impended, but at length the little volunteer army left the field.

General Ross reported his loss 56 killed and 185 wounded. Dr. Catlett, surgeon on General Winder's staff, who, on August 25 went from Washington to Bladensburg to attend some American wounded, says a British surgeon told him they had buried 100 on the field. When the enemy retired from Washington the day after the capture, Americans, found the bodies of fifty or sixty English soldiers on the field of Bladensburg and buried them. The American loss was twenty-six killed and fifty-one wounded.

At 8 o'clock on the evening of August 24 the British entered Washington, turning from the Bladensburg Road into Maryland Avenue and marching to the east front of the Capitol. Commodore Tingey set fire to the navy yard and the new frigate Columbia and the sloop of war Argus were burned. A party of American soldiers in Virginia fired the great bridge over the Potomac, and two bridges over the Eastern Branch were set on fire by our troops.

The British entered the Capitol and applied the torch, using the thousand books composing the Library of Congress, for kindling. The Capitol of 1814 was a far different building to the Capitol of 1904. Only the two little sandstone wings were standing. The central structure, on which the dome rests had not been built. A wooden passage connected the two wings. The stone walls were not much damaged by the fire. The English went to the White House. Madison expecting an American victory, had prepared a feast for the American officers. Madison and his Cabinet fled, but left the feast. The English ate this and set fire to the building. They also burned the offices of the Treasury and the War office.

As the English entered the city, a man standing behind the house of Robert Sewell, shot at General Ross and killed his horse. This house was burned. The hotel of Daniel Carroll, of Duddington, and several dwellings were also burned. The office of the "National Intelligencer" was wrecked, and the type and presses thrown into the street under the personal direction of Admiral Cockburn. The editors were Gales and Seaton, and Gales was an Englishman, whom Cockburn considered a traitor.

### Powder in a Well.

When the Americans abandoned the Arsenal (where the War College is building) they threw a number of kegs of powder into an old well.

During the night of August 24 a party of 200 English soldiers went to the Arsenal, and while pillaging there accidentally dropped a lighted portfire into the well. The explosion was heard for miles and the shellhouse at the Arsenal with its contents blew up too. Twelve of the English were killed and thirty wounded.

On the morning of August 25 the invaders withdrew from Washington, marched back to Benedict over the road they had come, embarked on their ships and sailed to North Point, near Baltimore, where they were badly beaten; where General Ross was killed, and where, during the course of the fighting, the "Star Spangled Banner" was written.

# *Luxuries or Necessities---Which? An Impromptu Debate*

A FEW evenings ago, at a New Hampshire summer boarding house, a group of perhaps a dozen vacation lovers sat chatting together and exchanging stories, notes a writer in the "Boston Herald." As men and women alike, they were a bright set of people; the stories were not of that mere "haw! haw!" kind which grows so tedious through monotony of laughter unrelieved by serious thought.

Indeed, the subject of previous discussion that called the stories out in the way of concrete illustration had turned on the familiar French travesty, "I can get along without necessities, but I must have luxuries!"—a saying which many present insisted expressed the same kind of solid, paradoxical truth as, "I can get along without mere bread and meat, but I must have salt, butter, pepper, and mustard."

### Lies in Essences.

All that makes human life taste—so they argued—either like a crude raw turnip or a deliciously flavored Crawford peach lies in the presence or absence of a few highly volatilized essences.

"Yes, and it's just the same with talk, whether it shall be sprightly or tedious!" broke in one. "Yes, and with women, whether they shall be piquant and charming, like the specimens in this group!" chimed in a second. "Yes, and with everything else in the world—vacations, scenery, golf, boarding houses, digestions, the ripple of the breeze on a lake, and, above all, sermons!" echoed a third.

### Story That Was Told.

"When I was a young man, I had an odd experience of this universal principle that made me open my eyes wide," here interposed an elderly gentleman of the group. "I'd like to tell you about it, to see whether any of you can cap it with an illustration more pat to the matter in hand!" Whereupon he at once launched into the following narration:

"I had just graduated from college, you see, and crossed the Atlantic for Berlin, Germany, where I was to spend a couple of years in study at the university.

"Before the first year was over, however, my digestion had gone to wrack and my head become so badly rattled that further close application was an impossibility.

### Strenuous Dietary.

"Meanwhile I had heard a great deal about a famous water cure establishment in Austrian Silesia, presided over by an uneducated peasant named Priessnitz, warranted to be able to put out the most raging fires of digestive heartburn with copious inundations of cold mountain water and to restore the most rickety of heads to a condition of serenest nervous equilibrium. So away I posted for Priessnitz, to put myself in his care for several months.

"It was midwinter when I arrived at my destination among the snow-covered mountains and began to submit myself to my daily regime of ice-cold sitz baths, beanpolejabbing douches, cracking frozen bandages round the middle and gallons of fire-extinguishing water applied internally.

### With Peasants.

"Meanwhile, during long intervals of leisure between these serious duties, I found great pleasure in gradually making myself at home in the households of the poor peasants, settled on their little patches of land all round the central village. They proved to be simple, social, and hospitable.

"In one family in especial I grew to be on the friendliest footing. It consisted of a man of forty-five to fifty years, his wife and daughter of eighteen. But the man was ailing and scarcely strong enough to work in the most intermittent way, and his disease was so steadily gaining on him that in a month or two he was wholly confined to the house, and after that to his bed.

### Human Talk.

"To the very end he liked to have me come in and talk with him on simple human grounds, neither Catholic, Protestant, American nor Austrian, but better and deeper than any of these poor distinctions, till, on the last occasion I went to visit him, I saw his poor, wasted body stretched out in his winding sheet, and with two tall wax candles burning at the head, symbolically to light his soul on the dim, mysterious way it was to journey through realms unknown.

### Desperately Poor.

"These Austrian peasants in that remote mountain region were desperately poor, and it pained my heart to think of the lone widow and her sole daughter, now that the strong arm on which they had relied so many years was withered and dead. In those faraway days I had money galore and could play the young prince with the best. So I resolved to make provision for them that would substantially carry the two over the next six months in the meager way in which they were accustomed to live.

### For Necessities.

"Alas! however, I was young and inexperienced, and at the farthest remove from having sounded the depths of the profound maxim, 'I can get along without necessities, but I will have luxuries!' If I had been, I should never have done what I did—that is, before the funeral, have handed over the whole lump sum in a roll of bank bills to the widow, to be, as I innocently supposed, gradually and economically transplanted into meal and potatoes and salt pork and firewood and cabbage. It was the vision of these—the grand staple necessities of human existence—that filled my soul with a sense of peace in thinking over the solid provision I had made for the widow and orphan against the stern stress of calamity.

"But, unhappily, my mind was of a practical rather than an artistic cast. The soul of the widow, as I later found, dwelt in a more glorified realm of being than mine.

### Went for Funeral.

"Two days later the little open square of the village witnessed the most magnificent pageant of a funeral the oldest inhabitant could remember. Messengers had been dispatched to three or four villages in the neighborhood to summon extra priests, who appeared with banners and small acolytes to hold the tassels and keep erect the large burning wax candles that were borne along.

"A sonorous brass band discoursed requiems and funeral dirges, while—Heaven save, the mark!—I was expected to march at the head of the procession as chief mourner. Thus impressively we moved on to the church, where the burial service was celebrated and masses said for the repose of the soul of the departed.

### And More to Come.

"By this time I innocently supposed that all was over, and that I would now be permitted unobtrusively to retire to private life. Vain hope! A large funeral dinner of forty peasant guests was to follow, at which, at one end of the table, I must needs assume the seat of honor, and, at the other, throned the widow, in her weeds, but proud as a peacock.

"For once in her poor, bleak, moiling life she was the grandest dame in the village, a virtual tragedy queen; and while at first, I must confess, I felt nettled that my comfortable provision of needful bread, meat, and firewood should thus have been consumed on the flaming altar of these final obsequies of funeral luxury, later reflections have often induced in me a belief, as I have thought of the devout woman who broke the alabaster box of precious perfume over the master's feet, that in reality my swiftly vanishing funds had administered to the poor widow a consolation such as the world could neither give nor take away.

"She was used to poverty, and could stand it out to the end. Now, for once, she had had her taste of prodigal luxury of feeling."